



Press Release

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

For Immediate Release

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Media Note

Middle East Partnership Initiative to Expand Support to Civil Society

The Coordinator for the Middle East Partnership Initiative at the American Embassy is pleased to announce that the Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) has extended the deadline to February 8, 2005 for the open competition to fund projects that support the role of civil society throughout the Middle East.

MEPI is seeking concept papers as pre-applications under this RFA. Concept papers need to outline a detailed series of activities linked to reform, why these issues are a priority, and how these activities would build on expertise that already exists throughout the Middle East and North Africa region with sustainable impact. Pre-applications must clearly articulate the institutional capacity and expertise of the submitting organization(s). Concept papers are not to exceed seven pages, and may be submitted in English, French or Arabic. The closing date is February 8, 2005. Authors of the highest scoring concept papers will be asked to submit full narrative and budget proposals to MEPI.

Some illustrative areas of project focus may include:

- Enhancing the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in fostering linkages with governing institutions.
- Support for region-based societal observatories and institutions that benchmark and monitor reform and best practices through analytical models and research.

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- Support (infrastructure and activities) for a fledgling civil society network, cyber or otherwise.
- Creation of public information centers/libraries on reform.
- Creation of a legal fund for targeted research and advocacy.
- Activating volunteer networks on reform activities.

Interested organizations are requested to access the Initiative's web site at www.mepi.state.gov and read under the Request for Applications "[Civil Society Program Announcement](#)" - Open competition for grant applications that support the role of civil society in advancing reform." For more information on the Middle East Partnership Initiative, please see the MEPI web site www.mepi.state.gov, the U.S. Embassy's web site at <http://qatar.usembassy.gov> or contact the American Embassy Public Affairs Office at +4884101 ext.6068